

Voices of Baltimore:

*Rahim is 16 years-old and is a former Supper Club participant at the PACT Center.*

***Talk a bit about what happens at dinner.***

We have little conversations. It can be about anything, probably like the basketball game that was on yesterday, news—I mean, whatever comes to mind, we talk about it.

***Did that help you come out of yourself a little?***

Yeah, knowing there are people who are willing to talk and listen. I think when I came here I learned how to open up more... I wasn't too comfortable talking about certain things like my father being passed away and my uncle and all that. I really kept most of that stuff bottled up... I thought it would be all right for me to open up, to let [them] know how I was, how I was feeling, and [they] gave me some good advice. It don't hurt to open up for real.

***What was the best thing about the adults you met here at the center?***

Oh, everybody seemed joyful, everybody seemed outspoken.... They really enjoyed working with kids. I don't know nobody out there that enjoy working with kids.

***Do you have adults in your life who are there for you?***

Yes, I have my mother and my other uncle, but that's mainly about it. I have my grandmother, she's old, she's about 78. I don't know how long she's gonna be alive but, God forbid, I hope nothing will happen to her. They're the only people I really got. And my son. That's it.

***What's it like in your neighborhood?***

I think anywhere is probably a violent area, but by me living there for so long, I really don't consider it violent, but there's a lot of stuff like drug activity that goes on around there... I don't hang out in that area like that because I learned how to distance myself, like, for three years on, I haven't been outside around the neighborhood, but to go to the store. I mean, I see my friends and I say "What's up?" and all that, but as far as me chilling, I think it's best for me not to. I got a son, and I want to be around my son when he gets older. I don't want to be gone like my father was. I know it ain't my father's fault, but I want to be there.

***What are your plans for the future?***

I just turned in my application to apply to Youth Works. I'm trying to look for another job so that if this Youth Works doesn't work out, then I have something to back up on. I want to go to college or try to work in HVAC, heating and air conditioning. I want to do that... It's really interesting to me. The thing about that, it ain't really nothing but math, so you really got to be good at math, and I really enjoy math. That's one of my best subjects.

